

# **WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION**

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

**August 2001**

### **CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION**

#### **Issuance of Cleanup and Abatement Order for Montecito Mobil, Santa Rosa**

[Staff contact: Jo Bentz]

On July 31, 2001, Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) No. R1-2001-84 was issued for the property at 6598 Montecito Boulevard, in Montecito Village Shopping Center, Santa Rosa. A retail gasoline service station, Bad Benita's, currently operates at the site.



(Bad Benita's gas station, Santa Rosa)

The site contains four underground storage tanks installed in 1964 and relined in 1997. Preliminary investigation of soil and groundwater in March 2001 showed the presence of high levels of gasoline and fuel oxygenates. The closest water supply well is approximately 100 feet from the site and serves a laundromat in the shopping center. Thirty other domestic wells have been identified within a 2,000-foot radius. The presence of domestic water supply wells and the high levels of MtBE in groundwater make this a Priority Class A site under State Water Board "Guidelines for Investigation and Cleanup of MtBE and Other Ether-Based Oxygenates." The CAO requires

immediate abatement of the discharge, including interim source remediation and continued investigation with the placement of shallow and deep monitoring wells.

#### **Santa Rosa Creek Contamination by Farmers Lane**

[Staff contact: Joan Fleck]

On July 31, 2001, the Regional Water Board issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order to Equilon Enterprises, LLC, and Shell Oil for the site at 2799 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. The discharger is required to meet specific standards contained in the Order, including the operation of the groundwater extraction system, interim measures to gain and maintain hydraulic control of the plumes, and abate the discharge of MtBE into Santa Rosa Creek.

As background information, in November 2000, the discharger began collecting surface water samples from Santa Rosa Creek on a monthly basis. MtBE has consistently been detected in surface water ranging from 0.57 to 80.8 ppb. MtBE was reported in groundwater at 10,000 ppb immediately adjacent to Santa Rosa Creek. The lateral and vertical extent of MtBE has not been defined.

#### **North Coast Railroad Authority**

[Staff contact: Janice Goebel]

In 1989, the Legislature created the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA). Utilizing state provided funding, the NCRA purchased the former Eureka Southern out of bankruptcy. The NCRA owns the rail line from Healdsburg to Eureka. From Healdsburg south to Lombard in Napa County, the rail line is owned by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Authority (NWPRA). Freight service and maintenance are the responsibility of the NCRA under an agreement with the NWPRA. In 1997, the NCRA Board chose to seek a private contract to provide operation of the freight service and maintenance of the railroad. The firm Rail-Ways was selected as the contractor.

Within weeks of the agreement, the 1998 storm damage closed the railroad north of Willits with a series of landslides. Freight service continued south of Willits until the Federal Railroad Authority (FRA) ordered the suspension of operations of the entire railroad in November 1998.

In 1996, a Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Warden located in Willits began investigating tips from anonymous informants that the NCRA had been improperly managing and handling hazardous wastes. An investigation by DFG revealed improper handling and disposal of hazardous waste and the improper handling of earthen material, railroad ties, etc. along the entire rail line. In early 1997, the Regional Water Board issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order to the NCRA addressing the discharges at the Willits Rail Yard. In late 1997, a second Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued to the NCRA addressing discharges of waste earthen material along the rail line. The NCRA did not comply with the Cleanup and Abatement Orders and enforcement hearings were held before the Regional Water Board in 1998.

The Regional Water Board issued a Time Schedule Order, and the NCRA again did not comply, mostly due to lack of money. In 1999, the Executive Officer referred noncompliance with its Orders to the Attorney General's office to seek injunctive relief. The Regional Water Board enjoined in a case filed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Department of Fish and Game. The outcome of the suit is an Environmental Consent Decree (ECD) signed by the Agencies and the NCRA. Since issuance of the ECD, the agencies have been working with the NCRA to achieve compliance with the ECD. To date, compliance has not been achieved.

In 2000, Governor Davis signed a bill, AB 2928, authorizing \$60 million for the NCRA. The \$60 million is to address long-term and short-term needs related to administrative expenditures, loan repayment, ECD compliance (4.1 million), debt reduction, and repair and stabilization of the track and its associated facilities. The \$60 million is being disbursed to the NCRA through the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans. The agencies have been working closely with the CTC and Caltrans to ensure that compliance with the ECD is addressed.

The railroad is currently operating with FRA approval from Penngrove to Lombard. Improvements north of Penngrove to Windsor are the next portion of track to be repaired and reopened. The next section will be Windsor to Willits, with the hope of opening to Willits before the end of this year.

## Nemacur Spill-Update, Geyserville

[Staff contact: Rachel Bosworth]

On June 14, 2001 the County of Sonoma, Office of the District Attorney, Environmental and Consumer Law Division, achieved a settlement with the vineyard management company, Vino Farms, Inc., to pay a \$67,000 settlement for civil and criminal charges stemming from a release of the pesticide Nemacur at a Geyserville vineyard. The release occurred in November 2000, resulting in the death of approximately 400 birds.



(Posted signs, Geyserville Vineyard)

Nemacur, a restricted use insecticide-nematocide, was applied to approximately 30 acres of vineyard by means of drip irrigation. Pools of Nemacur-tainted water were evident both within the vineyard and near the injection manifold/well head assembly of the irrigation well. The pooled water near the well is suspected to have been caused by a leak from a faulty gasket. Because Nemacur is highly toxic to avian species, birds that bathed in or consumed water from the pools of tainted water absorbed the chemical and died.

## WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION

### Geysers Recharge Project, Update

[Staff contact: Paul Keiran]

Contractors are close to completing the first two vertical holes on the Russian River. These holes will provide the staging for micro-tunneling under the Russian River. Mobilization for the micro-tunneling should begin by the week of August 13th. Jack-and-bore work on Poole Creek also should be completed by the week of August 13th. No work has begun on the Windsor Creek or Starr Creek crossings.

Pipe laying work continues on Alexander Valley Road, originally with two active crews. Traffic delays on Alexander Valley Road necessitated that the two crews be reduced to one. Pipe work also continues on Eastside Road; contractors should complete Old Redwood Highway construction segment by August 13, 2001.



(Boring auger, Healdsburg Construction site, Geysers Project)

Hydrostatic pressure testing of the completed Llano/Mark West segments revealed that no leaks, other than a few manhole gaskets, were detected. The water used to test this section will be stored in the pipes and subsequently used to test future sections as they are completed.

In a related matter, Lake County (Central Valley Region) is facing a \$4.5 million setback in its wastewater pipeline expansion to the Geysers after officials learned too late that the legislation providing the money also subjects its partner in the project to unacceptable conditions.

The legislation signed by Governor Gray Davis in April contained the caveat that Lake County's partner at the Geysers, the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA), must agree to sell 10 megawatts to the state in exchange for state funding to complete the pipeline.

The state grant was supposed to be the last piece of funding for a pipeline expansion to send wastewater from the North County to the Geysers, where it is turned into steam for power generation.

Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin had stepped up to help the County with a bill to provide a \$4.5 million state grant for the project.

Now construction of the \$30.8 million pipeline expansion project called Basin 2000 is continuing despite uncertainty over where the necessary funding to complete the project will come from.

County officials now are hoping that Strom-Martin will introduce a new bill to help obtain \$4.5 million without committing the NCPA to sell power to the state. They need the money by fall in order to avoid a delay in the construction, which is funded by ratepayers and other state and federal money.

## Annual Storm Water Reports

[Staff contact: Leon Wakefield]

As of the issuance of this report, staff have received 254 annual storm water reports with 86 reports still outstanding. Ultimately, letters of non-compliance will be sent to those facilities with overdue reports.

## Hayfork Wastewater Treatment Facility, Trinity County

[Staff contact: Manuel

Baldenegro]

Hayfork is an unsewered community served by onsite systems with a history of known failures due to high clay soils unsuitable for subsurface disposal. In 1997, the Trinity County Waterworks District No. 1 (District) participated in the Small Community Grant Program to undertake sewer improvements. On February 9, 1998, the District received concept approval from the State Water Board's Division of Clean Water Programs to construct new wastewater treatment and disposal facilities. In late fall of 2000, construction of waste treatment works was at 90-percent completion. On June 18, 2001, the new wastewater treatment facility was completed and placed on-line. The waste treatment facilities consist of a collection system, an influent bar screen and headworks followed by two aerated primary ponds, a secondary pond, two wetland-polishing ponds and two percolation ponds for final disposal. The plant is designed to treat 0.243 million gallons per day (mgd) dry weather flow and a peak wet weather flow of 0.729 mgd. This publicly owned treatment works is currently regulated by requirements issued by the Regional Water Board on May 28, 1998. The facilities are located adjacent to Salt Creek, a tributary of Hayfork Creek in the Trinity River Watershed, approximately two miles southwest of Hayfork.

## Yreka Construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, Siskiyou County

[Staff contact: Manuel Baldenegro]

The City of Yreka owns and operates facilities for treatment and disposal of municipal wastewater from the community of Yreka. On September 26, 1996, the Regional Water Board issued Waste Discharge Requirements for the City of Yreka Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Order contains



discharge prohibitions, Water Quality Objectives, requirements for solids disposal, and standard provisions.

On September 24, 1998, the Regional Water Board issued a Cease and Desist Order with a time schedule and connection restriction to the City of Yreka for discharging waste from an overloaded effluent disposal area and percolation pond seepage to Yreka Creek, a tributary of the Shasta River.

Additional deficiencies involved in-plant solids handling and sludge dewatering, which exceeded available sludge bed drying capacity. To date, and in compliance with the Cease and Desist Order, the City has developed a biosolids disposal facility for land spreading and incorporation of dewatered sludge. The biosolids disposal facility is regulated under waste discharge requirements issued by the Regional Water Board on April 27, 2001.

The City of Yreka has developed a Financial Plan and received funding under the State Water Board's Revolving Fund (SRF) for construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements. On August 1, 2001, the Director of Public Works for the City of Yreka advised that construction of plant modifications started on July 5, 2001. Construction activities for the next several months include:

- Clearing and grubbing the expansion area (50 acres) for installation of a geoflow shallow subsurface dispersion system and disposal of final effluent; and
- Constructing a new aerobic digester; upgrading the headworks with a self-cleaning screen and compactor; and installing two dissolved air floatation (DAF) systems for more efficient sludge thickening in digesters prior to dewatering.

Completion of construction and plant improvements is scheduled for March 1, 2002. As this construction progresses, follow-up reports will be provided.

## **WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

### **Update on TMDL Unit Activities**

[Staff contact: Bryan McFadin]

The TMDL Development Unit contracted with a consulting firm during the middle of July to gather stream temperature data by remote sensing from a helicopter using a technology called Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR). FLIR monitoring measures infrared energy from streams using calibrated sensors to develop a 'snapshot' of water temperatures. The data that is produced by FLIR can identify heating and cooling reaches, and provide comprehensive data

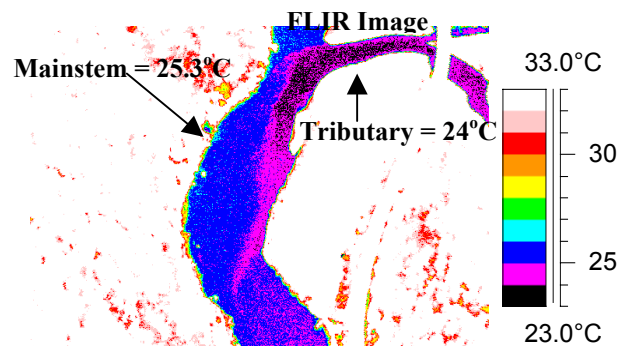
useful for calibration of computer simulation models. FLIR data was collected for approximately 185 miles of stream reaches in the Lost, Mattole and North Fork Eel Rivers.

A newsletter was distributed to all box holders at the Petrolia, Honeydew and Whitethorn post offices to inform residents of the Mattole watershed of the upcoming TMDL and activities supporting it.

(FLIR example: Aerial photo of a river confluence with a



tributary in Oregon)



(Forward looking infrared image of the same location)

On July 16, 2001, David Leland and Bryan McFadin were guests on a news and call-in show on radio station KMUD (Redway). The purpose of the show was to inform listeners of the TMDL process, explain the FLIR helicopter flight, and answer related questions.

The TMDL development unit staff have been conducting field work related to temperature studies of the Mattole, North Fork Eel, Klamath and Lost Rivers. Data loggers that record stream and air temperatures, as well as meteorological data have been deployed.

### **Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program**

[Staff contact: Robert Klamt]

The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) is gearing up for its second year of implementation in the state. Representatives from the nine regions, the State Water Board, and the Department of Fish and Game and US Geological Survey recently met to discuss standardization of sampling procedures and coordination of sample analysis with the two agencies under contract to the program.

Draft SWAMP work plans were shared among the regions. The next draft is due to the group on August 2, 2001. Our work plan includes 24 permanent stations throughout the major river systems in the Region, and about 40 sites concentrated in the Eel River, Humboldt County and Scott and Shasta watersheds. The primary area for focus this year is the Eel and Humboldt watershed management areas.

Staff are coordinating within the office to ensure that special target areas are included in the program, especially tributaries to Humboldt Bay.

As mentioned above, we have contracts with USGS and Fish and Game for sample collection and analysis, and will be using those contracts for analyses ranging from basic water chemistry and nutrients to heavy metals and pesticides to sediment transport. Some of the funds will be dedicated to installing new stream flow gages and/or activating abandoned gages.

Coordination will increase with local and state agencies in the coming weeks to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts of others and to look for opportunities to share work and enhance this program as well as other programs.

Peter Otis is the Monitoring Coordinator and can be contacted for additional information or clarification at [otisp@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:otisp@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov) or (707) 576-2662.

### **Proposition 13 Contracts**

[Staff contact: Gail Seymour]

Contractors of the nine awarded Proposition 13 grants received contract guidance documents on July 25 and the contract process is underway. Between now and February, 2002, Region I contract managers will be assisting contractors with the development of their project scopes and budgets, working with the Grants and Contracts Administration Unit, Division of Water Quality in refining and finalizing the scopes of work, making initial project site visits, and preparing contract packages. Contracts will be executed between April and July 2002.

The Proposition 13 contract managers are: Rick Azevedo, Janet Blake, Jeff Church, Lauren Clyde, Reg Cullen, Carrie Lukacic, and Gail Seymour.

### **TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION**

#### **Sonoma Coast Associates and Russian River Redwoods, Jenner Gulch**

[Staff contact: Christine Wright-Shacklett]

A recent development has caused the road repairs of the Sonoma Coast Associates THP in Jenner Gulch to be delayed. According to some of the residents in the Jenner Gulch area, the Sonoma Coast Associates timber harvest plan encompasses an area that is designated as a "special treatment area" by the Coastal Commission. Also, surveys had not been completed for the spotted owl, which is listed on the endangered species list. At this time, it is uncertain if the timber harvest plan will have to be amended prior to resuming road repair work. Staff is working with the California Department of Forestry to obtain clarification on these issues.

On July 25, 2001, the two timberland owners asked the State Water Board to reserve the right to amend their March 29, 2001, petitions to appeal the monitoring and reporting programs. This matter will be discussed at the August Board meeting.

#### **Hawthorne Timber Company, LLC; the Campbell Group; Campbell Timberland Management, LLC, HTC Log Corporation; and Western Blasting Technologies**

[Staff contact: Christine Wright-Shacklett]

There have been no significant developments on this matter since the last report. Negotiations are still in process.

#### **State Board Appeal Regarding Hole in the Headwaters Timber Harvest Plan 520**

[Staff contact: Frank Reichmuth]

The State Water Board issued its ruling on the evidentiary objections at its July Board meeting and legal briefing is due on this matter on August 24, 2001.

# ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS/ ORDERS

There were four Administrative Civil Liability Complaints (ACLCs) issued during the month of July. One of these ACLCs, Panattoni Development, is scheduled to be heard at the August meeting. The California Cider Company, Inc., and Mayacama Golf Club ACLCs have been settled with payment of the amount. Sonoma County has agreed to settle its ACLC and have asked to work with staff on a supplemental environmental plan. Below are summaries of these complaints.

## Sonoma County Water Agency, Airport Wastewater Treatment Plant

[Staff contact: Paul Keiran]

On July 6, 2001, an Administrative Civil Liability Complaint was issued to Sonoma County Water Agency for the Airport Wastewater Treatment Plant in the amount of \$60,000. The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) violated its NPDES construction permit on six occasions during the period December 2000-February 2001. Inadequate erosion and sediment controls led to significant sediment discharges from SCWA's effluent reservoir construction site on Mark West Station Road. These sediments discharged into two adjacent wetlands and Windsor Creek.



(Erosion/sediment controls being overwhelmed at SCWA Reservoir Construction Project)

## Panattoni Development

[Staff contact: John Short]

On July 5, 2001, an Administrative Civil Liability Complaint was issued to Panattoni Development in the amount of \$7,850 for failure to file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Board and failure to apply for and obtain a NPDES permit for construction activities. The project involved construction of the Agilent Technology facilities in the airport business park area.

## Mayacama Golf Club

[Staff contact: John Short]

On July 6, 2001, an Administrative Civil Liability Complaint was issued to Forsythe Pacific (Mayacama Golf Club) in the amount of \$12,000 for sediment discharge violations to tributaries of Mark West Creek during construction of a new golf course.



(Just above North Creek, confluence with Mark West Creek)





(In Mark West Creek, 75 feet below confluence with North Creek)

## **CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13267 LETTER ORDERS**

There were two California Water Code section 13267(b) Orders issued during the month of July.

## **SPILLS, COMPLAINTS, AND INVESTIGATIONS**

There was one spill reported on the Sanitary Sewer Overflow and Spill Data Management System since the last report. Below is a description of the spill.

### **Spill Report, City of Eureka, Humboldt County**

[Staff contact: Emily Dean]

A 3" PVC pressure line serving six houses in the forested area near Trinity and Q Streets cracked on the morning of July 24, 2001. Residents reported an odor to the City. The City responded, noted seepage, and repaired the cracked line. City staff estimate that 300-400 gallons of untreated sewage was released. The sewage traveled over an unpaved surface 75 feet downgradient until it reached Second Slough. The Department of Health Services (DHS) was contacted. Because of the infiltrative capacity of the unpaved surface and the low volume of the spill, DHS does not believe that this spill warrants the restriction of shellfish harvest in Humboldt Bay.

## **UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLEANUP FUND PROGRAM**

From May 2001 through July 2001, there has been a total of \$2,030,751 in funds issued to tank owners in Region 1 from the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund.

## **CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 CERTIFICATIONS**

There were 12 Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certifications and one Denial Without Prejudice issued during the month of July.

Information regarding all proposed certifications is available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html>

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES/ WORKSHOPS/UPCOMING EVENTS**

- David Leland presented case studies on the development of temperature and sediment TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads) in the North Coast Region to the Environmental Protection Agency's Watershed Academy on TMDL Development Training in Riverside on June 27, 2001, and Sacramento on June 28, 2001.
- On July 21, 2001, Matt St. John attended the Mattole River Celebration in Whitethorn as a representative of the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) Development Unit. This annual event is a community gathering held at the Whitethorn Grange to discuss and celebrate the Mattole River. In addition to food, drink, music and games, the event provides an opportunity to share information about the condition of the Mattole River, and discuss activities to restore and protect the watershed. Representatives from several local organizations, the Mattole Restoration Council, the Mattole Valley Historical Society, and the Sanctuary Forest manned tables presenting information on work being done to restore, protect, and document the conditions and history of the Mattole River watershed.

St. John provided a poster board presentation and literature on TMDLs, and the specific work underway by the TMDL Development Unit in developing sediment and temperature TMDLs for the Mattole River. The public expressed considerable interest in this work and the implications for landowners.

The TMDL Development Unit is making an effort to participate in similar outreach events in order to share information and solicit input on TMDLs as part of the overall public participation requirement for TMDL development.

- Emily Dean presented a California Toxics Rule Workshop on July 26, 2001, at Woodley Island Marina in Eureka. The focus of the workshop was on standardizing sampling plans and sample collection activities required by the California Toxics Rule.
- Staff of the Santa Rosa Cleanups Unit is preparing for the Autumn Waterfest event to be held on October 20, 2001, at Roseland Elementary School in Santa Rosa. The purpose of this event is to update residents on groundwater contamination and clean-up issues in the southwest area of Santa Rosa.
- The Regional Water Board will have an informational booth at the annual Sol Fest in Hopland on August 25 and 26, 2001. Last year over 10,000 people attended the Fest. The Fest will include speakers, workshops, tours, music, exhibitor booths, children's activities and food and drinks. The Fest is oriented to demonstrating renewable energy and sustainable lifestyle technologies. This event is an opportunity for the Regional Water Board to communicate our mission and raise awareness of the public of the work and services we provide.

## **PUBLIC FILE REVIEW**

From July 1 through August 1, 2001, two written requests were made for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, a total of 28 people came into the office and requested file review.

## **PROMOTIONS/STAFF HIRING**

Susan Warner was appointed the new Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board on July 26, 2001. Luis Rivera is the Acting Division Chief of the Cleanups and Special Investigations and Janice Goebel is the Acting Senior of the Cleanups Central Unit. There were no new hires during the month of July

## **AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER REGIONAL WATER BOARD MEETINGS**

The Regional Water Board meeting for August is scheduled for August 23, 2001, in Santa Rosa. The September 27, 2001, meeting will be held in Crescent City.



The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web-site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov>.